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# Approximately 2,200 degrees conferred during Georgia Southern's 2018 Fall Commencement ceremonies

DECEMBER 8, 2018

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On Dec. 7 and 8, approximately 2,200 undergraduate and graduate students from Georgia Southern University's Statesboro, Armstrong and Liberty Campuses received degrees in three Fall Commencement ceremonies.

Georgia Southern President Shelley C. Nickel welcomed the graduates and their families to Fall Commencement. She extended her personal congratulations to the graduates on their academic achievements, recognizing that there is no greater benchmark for the University's success than a graduate with a great job.

She also commended the University faculty members who have inspired students throughout their academic careers and beyond.

"Each graduate will have his or her own special story about a professor whose inspiration and interest influence that student's success," said Nickel. "Caring faculty committed to the success of students are the hallmark of Georgia Southern University."

During the 1 p.m. ceremony held at Allen E. Paulson Stadium in Statesboro on Dec. 7, alumnus Chris Riley, chief of staff for Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal, congratulated the Class of 2018. He encouraged the diverse body of approximately 1,700 undergraduate and graduate students to keep an open mind, stay focused, serve others and aim high as they move into their careers.

"Set goals, don't judge and have a good work ethic," said Riley. "Make sure your servant's heart is larger than your ego. Do something, and do it right. Surround yourself with a good team. You all have been part of something great. You are a Georgia Southern graduate. You're an Eagle."

Alumna M. Ann Levett, Ph.D., Savannah-Chatham County Public School System Superintendent of Schools, addressed the 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. ceremonies held at the Armstrong Sports Arena. Approximately 500 degrees were conferred on Armstrong and Liberty Campus students.

"As an alumna, it is the ultimate honor to be here," Levett shared. "Today is a great day for you. It's a great day for our community."

Instead of offering advice, she prompted graduates with thought-provoking questions, asking them to consider their participation in activism, legislation, community service, gender equality, caring for the environment and inspiring those who most need help in the community, as they move forward in life.

"As a member of this society of new graduates, you're expected to give more time to our community," stated Levett. "Georgia Southern is known for producing leaders. What is your next bold move?"

In closing, she encouraged the graduates to appreciate their inner strength and how far they've come.

"I invite you today to reflect on the journey you've completed," said Levett. "You have inspired me and you have inspired others. You've inspired people and you have no idea your completion today will inspire them to make a bold move. You have listened to your heart, you have leaned on your colleagues, you have gone out and sought the most available resources to meet this goal."

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research institution founded in 1906, offers 141 degree programs serving nearly 26,500 students through nine colleges on three campuses in Statesboro, Savannah, Hinesville and online instruction. A leader in higher education in southeast Georgia, the University provides a diverse student population with expert faculty, world-class scholarship and hands-on learning opportunities. Georgia Southern creates lifelong learners who serve as responsible scholars, leaders and stewards in their communities. Visit [GeorgiaSouthern.edu](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu).